

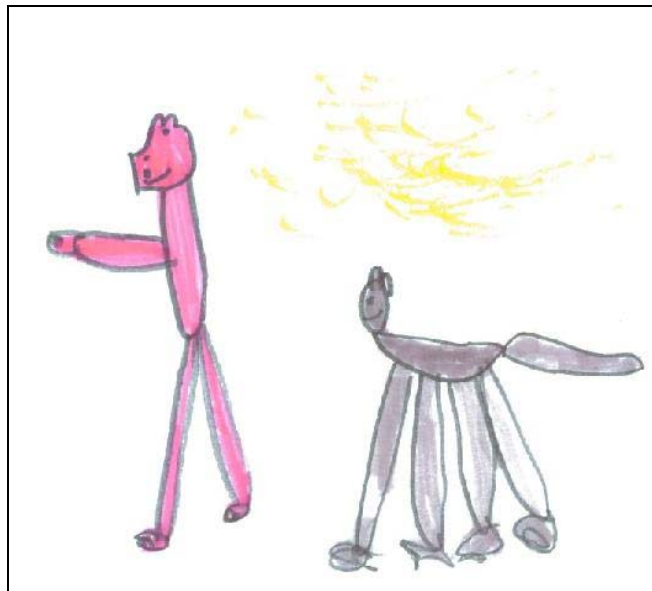
WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART?

Key Focus: Literacy, Language Development, Creative Arts

Observation: After reading *The Three Little Pigs* to the whole class, the teacher asks the children the following questions:

1. Did you like this story?
 - While most children say yes, Brianna says no. You ask Brianna why.
 - "I just didn't like it."
2. What was your favorite part of the story?
 - Brandon: the ending
 - Emily: ending
 - Many other children agree

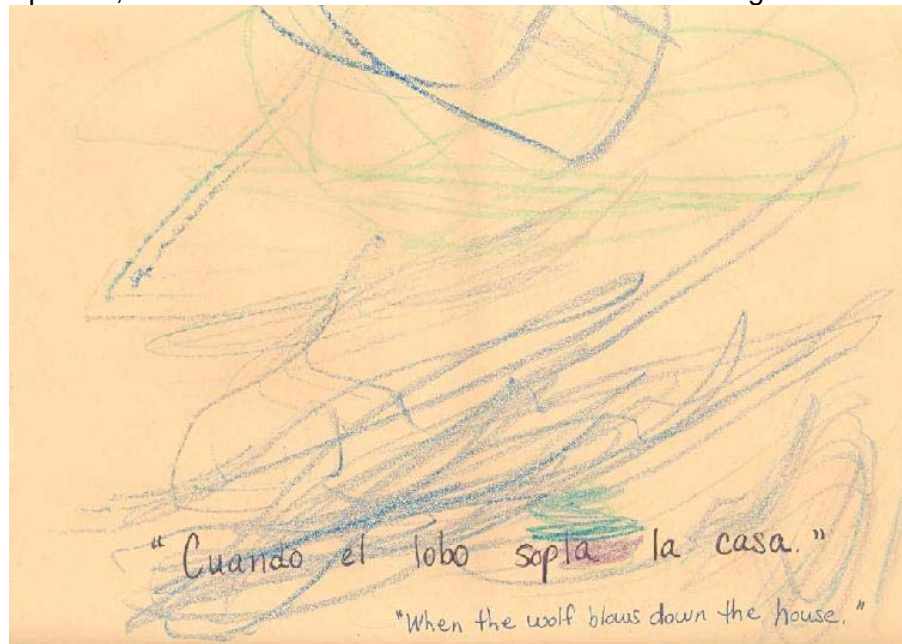
Then she asks the children to draw their favorite part of the story. Here are three of the pictures that children in the class drew:



The teacher labeled the parts of Emily's picture:



The assistant teacher wrote what Santiago said about his picture in Spanish, and then the teacher wrote the translation in English:



Reflecting on the Documentation:

**Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: What information is missing in this brief anecdotal record? How do the drawing samples create a different picture of children's understanding?

Sample Responses: The jottings/anecdotal record did not have much description. The teacher stopped noting children's names after the first two children. We don't know if the teacher asked additional questions about the ending as a follow-up or if the children used the word "ending" or a description of the ending of the story. Perhaps it could also be improved by providing descriptions of children's body language and evidence of excitement (or lack of engagement) during the book-reading session.

The work samples tap into a different range of abilities that children possess—in particular, the ability to represent ideas on paper. Without any dictation or notes on the first picture, we are unable to determine why the child has drawn the wolf and the pig smiling or if the straw house has been built or is already blown down. We also do not know why the child chose to represent that part of the story. The labels on the second picture and the dictation on the third picture are helpful; with this information, it is easier to interpret what the pictures represent and to compare to pictures the children will create later in the year.

Interpretation of
the Observation:

**Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: What do the primary/original responses (in the anecdotal record/jotting) tell you about children's story comprehension skills?

Sample Responses: If the children's responses were simply "the ending," the children in this class are not offering very detailed or meaningful responses to what they liked about the story or their favorite part of the story. It is not clear from the record whether there was more to the statement that was not recorded.

If we assume that all they said was "the end" then we would conclude that they aren't attending much to detail and may mimic their friends' responses. However, the teacher does not ask very detailed questions, either. Asking, "Did you like it?" while a worthwhile question, often elicits yes or no answers. If the teacher is assessing the children's comprehension of the story, he or she needs to be prepared to probe further with the children after they offer their initial response. For example, "What did you like about the ending?" or "Tell me more about why you liked the ending."

Ask: How do their drawings compare to what they said?

Sample Responses: The drawings demonstrate that some children had far more memory and comprehension for aspects of the story than their original recorded answers suggested. They also remember detail about the characters and what happened. For example, we know that Emily

remembered the types of houses that the three little pigs built. Note that the representations of the wolf and three pigs differ in terms of facial expression (a frown versus smiles) and where they live (a hill versus houses). However, the annotations on the pictures were important for interpreting what was in the pictures. This is especially true for Santiago's picture. The dictation helps to bridge the gap between his fine motor/creative arts skill and his understanding of the story. Without the dictation, we would not know he was representing the action in the story (as his favorite part).

Relating Your
Observation to the
Child Outcomes
Framework:

**Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

2B1/2 (Literacy/ Book Knowledge and Appreciation): Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and nonfiction books and poetry. Shows growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read, choosing to look at books, drawing pictures based on stories, asking to take books home, going to the library, and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.

1A1 (Language Development/Listening and Understanding): Demonstrates increasing ability to attend to and understand conversations, stories, songs, and poems.

5B1 (Creative Arts/Art): Gains ability in using different art media and materials in a variety of ways for creative expression and representation.

Next steps for
large group
instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

Ask: What other questions could you ask children to foster story comprehension? How could you record these data?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- For most stories teachers could ask questions such as:
"What do you think will happen next?" (making a prediction during the story).
"Tell me about your favorite part of the story."
"Why do you think the main character (did something)?"
"What would you do if you were in this story?"
- For some of the questions the teacher might like to ask, he or she could think ahead to what responses might be and create a form for collecting information about what the children notice or say. [Note to presenter: Direct the participants to look at the chart included on their handout.]

The Three Little Pigs

| Possible responses: | Brianna | Brandon | Emily | Aaron |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| "Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin" | Favorite part | | Funniest part | |
| Wolf wanted to get the pigs | | Reason to blow houses down | | |
| Blew down the straw house | | | | |
| Blew down the stick house | | | | |
| Could not blow down the brick house | | | | Favorite Part |
| Wolf fell in hot water | | Favorite part | | |

- To promote richer and more descriptive language, the teacher could have asked children to act out portions of the story and/or pick one or two vocabulary words and talk about their meaning with the class.
- After children draw their favorite part of the story, regroup in the circle and have each child share a favorite part. This will help children see the variation in responses and the differences in everyone's answers. The teacher can reinforce that each child is entitled to his or her own opinion and has a different point of view.

Next steps for individualized instruction:

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for individual children?

** Responses will vary but might include:*

- As the children are working on creating their individual drawings about their favorite part of the story, walk around and ask them to explain to you their favorite part of the story; write their words verbatim on their artwork or on a mailing label that you can stick on the back of their artwork.

Additional Notes:

Send home to parents a list of questions that they might want to ask children as they read books together. These questions will help children get into the routine of discussing books. You might want to ask parents to write down some of their child's answers and send them in the next day.